Pierre Lagrange

The Kenneth Arnold case

Note on the art of constructing and deconstructing some flying saucers * Introduction.

It is through an Associated Press dispatch that the flying saucer affair begins on Wednesday, June 25, 1947 at lunchtime. We are in Pendleton, a small town in northeastern Oregon. Nolan Skiff and William Bequette, two journalists from the local daily, Y East Oregonian, have just spoken with a young pilot, a certain Kenneth Arnold, about strange devices he observed the previous day over Mount Rainier, in the state of Washington. In order to help the pilot identify these devices, the two journalists write, one a short article that appears in Y East Oregonian, the other a news dispatch, which its author, Bequette, sends via the "C line" to the AP bureau in Portland. Here is the text of the dispatch that will result, heavy with consequences:

Pendleton, Ore., today with a man from Utah, south of here, who claims to have seen yesterday similar objects over the mountains around Ukiah. "It may seem impossible," Arnold declared, "but it is

thus 3

A major controversy follows the diffusion of this dispatch. Many other witnesses of observations of what Ton will begin to call "flying saucers" are coming forward. Journalists question the scientists. Multiple explanations are provided, all different but which in their overwhelming majority consider that the saucers result from misinterpretations of phenomena known to scientists but not (re)recognized by the witnesses. In order to explain this public enthusiasm for the saucers, psychologists, sociologists (but also pilots or army spokespersons) talk then of optical illusions, psychosis, mass hallucinations 4. In the years that follow, in reaction to the rejection of these It has been to look at folklore 10. The situation has been changing for about ten years. Finally, Anglo-Saxon folklore specialists, under the impetus of Linda Degh, seem to have annexed flying saucers to their "modern legends." In 1971, Linda Degh described UFOs as a belief legend, drawing on the small Kenneth Arnold case book that Jung devoted at the end of his life to the subject. But it was especially in 1977 that she urged her colleagues to take an interest in the question in an article precisely titled "UFOs and How Folklorists Should Look at Them 12." These articles and others published since then, under the pen of various folklorists—Anglo-Saxons in the great majority—allow Bullard to write that "times are changing and UFOs are beginning to receive the attention they deserve as the core of what may be the most extensive, vigorous and creative paranormal belief system in culture." Well, people often contact Allô Rumeur only when they are faced with information whose veracity they doubt. Nevertheless, the sociologist studies the believer, not the skeptic. From this fact one gets the following impression: while one could do sociology of the person who believes in the content of a modern legend, the one who doubts it would remain outside the analysis. This asymmetry seems to me to have a perverse effect on our conception of modern legends. Even if we refrain from taking a position on the reality of the phenomena

they describe, this approach still amounts to using sociology as a tool to reduce their content, to redefine it (often by reducing it to pure psychosociological phenomena). This ends up maintaining on modern legends the same positivist conceptions that have long been maintained about popular beliefs, sometimes with the consequences that we know 15. David Hufford oody 18.

The same David Hufford (as well as Gillian Bennett 19) also showed that the "against" arguments of modern legends can be regarded as constituting "traditions of disbelief" exactly in the same way that the discourse of "believers" forms "traditions of belief." Thus the rationalist who denounces belief in UFOs or lake monsters can become an object of interest for the sociologist in the same way as the "naïve" ones he criticizes.

This approach has (or should have) the consequence of forcing us to develop a sociological discourse which, in order to account for the whole range of arguments advanced for or against the content of legends, does not make an a priori split between what is credible and what is not, between "unverified information" and "reality." The researcher's interest should then rather focus on the multiple rhetorical strategies put in place. On zoology, or, at

at the very least, he subordinates his folkloric practice to zoology. Instead of asking what makes Bigfoot an outcast from zoological classifications (and an inclusion in other classifications), he tries to fit it into them and, consequently, to study the beliefs that would nevertheless remain about this creature. As he writes: "the idea appears that it may have been a real phenomenon somewhat obscured by the surrounding traditions 20." But, in doing so, his starting question is forgotten: indeed, once Bigfoot enters zoology, Hufford sees nothing left to explain. "Either it is an ancient tradition concerning such creatures that has been more persistent, widespread and durable than anyone has seriously considered; or the accounts are based on an objective and real referent, sometimes buried under a tradition and sometimes not, perhaps depending on the frequency of observations in a …" -close, to the error, that one must – when one is a scientist – know how to overcome. Hufford thus quickly falls back into the trap he thought he was avoiding, adopting the attitude he criticized before medical students: other kinds of knowledge are only redeemable when retranslated into the language of science. The popular is the error of tradition plus, sometimes, the real. But, to sift it, one needs the scientific gaze that Hufford believes is free of any contingency (and he is far from being the only one to share this idea). Why, then, would the scientificized Bigfoot be less approachable for a sociologist or folklorist than the popular Bigfoot? Would one a priori be truer than the other 22?

Also, when he writes a few years later, in a work and several articles otherwise remarkably well documented 23, that one can consider traditions of disbelief alongside

traditions of belief, this symmetry is only. the famous Friulian miller of the 16th century –, he manages without difficulty to treat on the same tone the beliefs of the Inquisitors and those of this peasant who objects to religion. As soon as it comes to modern UFOs or the various “scientific objections” that can be encountered nowadays, the researcher no longer knows what to do, whom to believe, and what to say. In short, he cannot maintain both the proximity and the distance that are required with respect to the different discourses studied, whether they are para-, peri-, meta-, pseudoscientific, or simply scientific.

Nevertheless, on the question of scientific controversies concerning parapsychology, there are some sociological works in which their authors have managed to treat with the same seriousness – or the same lightness, as one wishes – the various protagonists, whether they are parapsychologists or rationalist scientists. These are the works of Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch, two sociologists of tes, to the authorities or to scientists. In this sense, Arnold and the other UFO witnesses are closer to Men-nochio than to parapsychologists 27. The wager is therefore as follows: pose Hufford’s question, but try to answer it without presenting the saucers as what they are not—for the actors involved—(thus without reducing them to physical or psychosociological phenomena) and by taking all the actors seriously even in their explanations.

To do this, I will take the Arnold case at the moment it begins to interest, in early July 1947, the governmental and military bodies. We will therefore alternately follow the witness, the military investigators, and the scientific experts. It will be a matter of not attributing a priori more to one than to the others. Not simply and trivially relativistically, but in order to be able to follow very precisely the ways in which they will go about constructing or deconstructing the saucers. It was certain that they were missiles from the Moses Lake base. But that did not convince Arnold. At the Pendleton airfield, he recalculated the speed of the craft with other pilots. Result: 1,700 miles per hour. Even reduced, through new calculations, to 1,300 miles, this speed is too high. The sound barrier is

still, for a few more months, an insurmountable barrier. More and more convinced that he had observed secret craft– but are they Russian or American?– Arnold decides to go find the FBI office in Pendleton. An office he finds closed.

When the controversy erupts in the press, he expresses his bitterness at not seeing the military take an interest in his adventure. The Army and the FBI will eventually take care of the saucers, starting early July for the first and the end of this month for the second. In order to grasp these new developments in Arnold’s story, we will need to go back and forth through He reconstructs his adventure and supports it by calling upon various allies. To this document, he attaches three pages of biography 29, an opportunity for him to introduce himself and bolster his

credibility. Kenneth Arnold as seen by himself appears as a dynamic young businessman: after an early sports career he had to abandon due to a knee problem, the young Kenneth joined the Red Cornet company in 1938, “a manufacturer of automatic fire-fighting devices *°”. The following year, “I was promoted to district manager for a portion of the Western States and, in 1940, I established my own fire-fighting company known as Great Western Fire Control Supply 31.” Moreover, Kenneth Arnold is a pilot:

My flying experience began in Minot, North Dakota, when I was a child, when Earl T. Vance, from Great Falls, Montana, gave me my first flying lesson. In rai-

The Kenneth case I landed on 823 mountain pastures, and, after more than a thousand hours, my most serious problem was a flat tire 33.

Through these few lines, and as he explains elsewhere in the report, Arnold wants to blend in with the mass of pilots. Nothing in his past predestined him to see what he saw. He is not a visionary. This biography is accompanied by the detailed account of the June 24 observation. There, in nine pages accompanied by a sketch of the type of craft observed (see illustration p. 292), Kenneth Arnold details his adventure: the reasons for his passage near Mount Rainier, his spotting of a DC-4 flying toward Seattle, and finally his observation of the craft, announced by a bright flash. In his account no doubt is left about what he saw: “... I observed a chain of nine strangely-looking crafts 34...”. He questions them because of their shape: “I found it very odd that I could not distinguish their tail but assumed that they were…”. The breadth of the explanations he provides. The researcher can only separate the two aspects by arranging them in a new way, by re-cutting the experience-narratives he gathers according to a new scheme. From then on, he no longer talks to us about what these informants do, about their operations, about their choices, but about what they should have done, about what he, the researcher, does better, through the new choices, the new shares he produces.

If, after listening to Arnold recount his adventure, I leave him to return to the psychology of perception or to extract a materiality of the phenomena by comparing his adventure to that of others, I forbid myself from understanding what will happen to this narrative, and by which procedures it will be able to hold up—or not—against others.

By detailing his choices, their reasons, Arnold tries again to interest the only actors who, in his view, must take his observation into account: the military. He even openly expresses his ... neither a journalistic debate nor a scientific controversy. This is a governmental matter. If he went to find pilot friends, then journalists, it was simply to clarify the question of the origin of the devices. His interlocutors, by steering the discussion toward other points and in other places—especially in the public square—betrayed Arnold. They unrealized the devices in order to better create their paper saucers, which will change shape and direction each time a new actor seizes them.

To attract more attention, Arnold also summons the opinions of pilot friends who

have observed devices similar to his or have offered an opinion on what he saw. Thus, he recounts that aviators who served during the war assured him that he had not had a vision. They themselves were warned, during missions, that they might encounter similar devices. Arnold also cites another former military pilot who ... Is it deforming? Indeed. Speech flies away, writings remain, as they often say. But the recipients of this narrative can put it to different uses. They can, of course, prolong Arnold's movement, leave his aircraft in a black box, and have the country covered with radars and observation posts intended to spot possible secret Russian weapons 40. But, instead of delegating belief to the radars, they can also doubt Arnold, discuss his observation, or even explain it in another way. Whatever they do, the new interlocutors do not leave reality. Those sheets of paper that circulate among different actors, and that try to fix experiences, opinions, do not make us leave the real. Through the circulation of these pages, through their content, it is the nature of observations that is constantly redefined. We do not discuss in offices, we only write reports to better return above Mount Rainier on June 24 around 3 p.m. If the In California, another spokesperson for the Army Air Force declared: "If these flying disks are sent over the United States by a foreign power, it is our duty to know it and to take appropriate measures 41."

If we now enter the offices of the Army and the FBI, following the saucer observation accounts, we see how passing through a door can change reality. There, new players will seize our prodigious stories to slightly shift their meaning, and thereby alter the aspect of society.

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But, in order to properly set the stage for what is to come, I must first clarify that, starting in early July, agents of the Army Air Force began investigating saucer observation witnesses. Likewise, Office Memoranda began circulating from the various regional offices to the leadership of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reporting… your sector. The high hierarchy will not be long in reacting.

On July 10, a document written by a certain E. G. Fitch informs us that a discussion took place the day before between General Schulgen and a special agent named Reynolds. The former tells the latter that Air Corps Intelligence is taking the matter seriously and has put its scientists on it. He then offers a new hypothesis for us:

General Schulgen advised Mr. [Reynolds] that it was possible that the initial reported sightings of the alleged flying discs were false and launched by individuals seeking publicity, or reported for political reasons. He stated that, if this were the case, the subsequent sightings could result from mass hysteria. He suggested that the initial reported sightings might have been made by individuals with communist sympathies in order to trigger hysteria and a fear of secret Russian weapons 46.

And first, observed the alleged flying discs in order to determine whether they were sincere in their statements that they had seen these discs, or if their statements

were motivated by personal desire or for political reasons47.

Schulgen therefore wants the FBI to cooperate with Air Corps Intelligence. After some negotiations between the FBI and Schulgen through Reynolds48, the principle of cooperation was established on July 30. Authorization to investigate is given to local agents via the Bureau Bulletin49. Already, as I noted above, military investigators have begun to go find the witnesses. We can now return to Boise and suspect Kenneth Arnold of having received a visit.
Moving investigators to the witnesses…

On July 12, Kenneth Arnold met two military investigators from Hamilton Field base in California. “I was very happy to see them, …" On their list of people to interview 53. The Arnold couple and the two investigators therefore go to Boise Municipal Airport to locate E. J. Smith. M. Arnold is surprised to meet Dave Jonhson there, the reporter of the Idaho Daily Statesman of Boise. “I was wondering how on earth he could know,” he remarks 55. Brown and Davidson also wanted to meet him, since he had made a saucer observation on July 9. After the discussion during which, Arnold recounts, “everyone was talking at the same time,” and consequently, “no one learned much,” “Doris and I invited Davidson and Brown to come to our house so that we could discuss more calmly” 57. Our witness answers the investigators’ questions. “I stuck scrupulously to the facts. I did not consider my opinion important. I made drawings for them and reminded them of my original observation as best as I could, Mr.” Before leaving, the two military investigators. a neighborhood inquiry. They questioned journalist David N. Johnson “to find out whether he knew Mr. Kenneth Arnold of Boise, Idaho, well, and whether any credibility could be given to the statements made by Mr. Arnold^61.” He replied, “that, as far as he was concerned, everything Mr. Arnold said could be taken very seriously and that he, Mr. Johnson, truly believed that Mr. Arnold had seen the flying discs mentioned above^62.” Our

investigators will therefore find Arnold. The writer, Brown, seems to have formed a good opinion of our hero, describing him as “a 32-year-old man, married and father of two children^63.” His investigation also allowed him to learn that Arnold “is well regarded in the community where he lives, being a good family man who, by all appearances, provides very well for his family M.” Regarding the observation of the young businessman-pilot, Brown seems to agree with As long as the cooperation between the two services is effective.

To state what Arnold saw, the army hires experts. It is to them that our witness’s report is now addressed. Moreover, all these notes, all these opinions are for purely internal use. Nothing leaks out of the military offices. These memoranda—whose content he does not know, and perhaps even their existence—hardly allow Arnold to continue his development of the aircraft.

It is difficult to reconstruct the versions of Arnold’s report over about a semester. It was typewritten. Re-typed, it now spans four pages, but the typist who transcribed it removed some handwritten notes added by our witness during the review

of his typed observation. A copy was sent to the FBI, as part of the cooperation between that agency and the Air Force; the report in question will serve, alongside other reports, to produce some terse analysis on the "some highly confidential project unknown to AC/AS-2 or this Command" or of devices sent by a foreign nation that would have developed "a type of propulsion perhaps nuclear, which is beyond our current knowledge." The report also stresses the lack of clues—such as, for example, debris from crashed saucers on the ground—that could "indubitably establish the existence of these objects."

Twining recommends that the staff establish:

a directive assigning a priority, a security classification, and a Code Name for a detailed study of these matters, including the preparation of comprehensive files on all relevant and available data that will then be made available to the Army, the Navy, the Atomic Energy Commission, the JRDB, the Air Force Scientific Advisory Group, NACA, and the RAND and NEPA projects for comments and recommendations 66.

Following this letter and three others. sorting the order in the reports that reach them by eliminating those that are due to confusions with astronomical, meteorological phenomena or known flying objects. The Project, being based at Wright Patterson, near Dayton in Ohio, requests an astronomer from the State University. Hynek is then a professor there as well as director of the McMillin Observatory. It is in this dual capacity as an astronomer 70 and a “close neighbor” 71 that he becomes enlisted. With the army, his role is therefore to sort through observation reports in order to detect those that would be due to misidentifications with astronomical phenomena. In this respect, Hynek quickly concludes: “it seems there is no astronomical explanation for this classic incident which is the prototype of a number of UFO stories that occurred afterward.” But he does not stop there. He cannot explain the phenomenon, he says, but he noted in Arnold’s report According to all probability, the objects were closer than they seemed and were moving at a definitively “subsonic” speed 73.

In a single paragraph, Hynek destroys Arnold’s main argument: the speed of the craft. These craft, according to the astronomer, were closer than our businessman thought—therefore, their speed was much lower. This small variation in distance is enough for everything to fall into place. Move a few miles away and the sky becomes empty of saucers again. After a brief registration battle, Arnold’s craft will become “conventional airplanes.” The conclusion that will follow for military investigators is that the “incident 17” results from a confusion with airplanes. In other army documents, the diagnosis will be somewhat different. An Air Force document states:

The Air Force’s opinion is that the objects observed were due to a In a memorandum handed to the press in 1949 76.
Conclusion.

Here is the detail of the Arnold case in its military and scientific developments. I have tried, in the foregoing, to avoid a trap: the one that would consist at some point in abandoning the actors, ceasing to explicate the procedures they put in place in order to achieve their goals, and covering them with a new explanation that

re-attributes blame and merit based on criteria of the analyst. I could have turned the saucers into a scientific discussion topic as soon as Arnold gave his account to the press, somewhat like Hufford reconstructing a posteriori a coherence to the observation reports of Bigfoot. But, by doing so,

I would have deprived myself of a source of wonder: the one that consists of following how the saucers become, after a long process, after changes of hands and new translations, a subject. In the collection of texts between Boise and the army offices, our witness will change status several times: under his own pen, a simple patriotic pilot; under the pen of the FBI special agents, a possible Soviet agent; under that of the Hamilton Field investigator, again a sincere pilot. And, in the same movement, it is the saucers that gain or lose materiality. I do not have to decide between these different versions of the saucers and the character of Arnold; my problem is to identify the attributions of qualities. Arnold, investigators Brown and Davidson, and Hynek a little later are apparently placed under the same enigma. Simply, they do not do the same thing, and from these different practices come various and diverse saucers. Considering that Arnold “constructs his reality” while forgetting that Hynek does the same would be unfair and would deprive us of the possibility of explaining both events in similar terms. Forgetting the details of construction – in I had only followed Kenneth Arnold; I would have missed all the work done by the army experts. It was only by slipping in behind Lieutenant Brown and Captain Davidson that I could see what the saucers became in the military offices. Hence this first observation that the different groups interested in saucers are very differentiated, not pursuing the same goals. Hence different saucers: devices here, political propaganda or hoax elsewhere. Even though common elements circulate among these networks—the Arnold reports and those of other witnesses, press files, investigation and expertise reports—they do not allow certain actors to recruit others, and the qualities of the witnesses, the investigators, the saucers themselves are profoundly altered as a result. At no point do the subsequent actors simply add themselves to the previous ones to continue the task that was started; they always… Ucoupiques, like their medieval cousins, cannot withstand the multiplication of voyages to the Indies and, on the other hand, these Indies rather take the shape of an archipelago. According to the tide, isthmuses form that disappear immediately. Contacts are rare. Moreover, a solution to the saucers found by the army ceases to be one as soon as it— and when it— arrives in Boise, and vice versa.

Thus we see the danger of linking together elements, actors who are not such at the moment they are addressed: we obtain a picture of events that does not correspond at all to the real picture. Consequently, we do not account for the controversy, we do not explain the particularities of the debate. Simply, we prolong it. In short, we miss the bet of doing a sociology of the paranormal. Making UFOs a “modern myth” or

seeing them as the “greatest scientific problem of the 20th century” may advance the subject, not its anthropology.

Pierre … from a certain number of witnesses (civilian and military pilots, meteorologists, etc.). The authors then add a bit of detail in the reported equipment. They distinguish three categories of objects seen: “(1) disc-shaped, (2) cigar-shaped, or (3) fireball.” But they note that there may be only one type of object, the differences possibly being explained by “variations in visibility conditions and differences in viewing angle at the moment the objects were seen.” Finally, “it seems that objects have been seen,” and the rest of the report considers two hypotheses: the devices are American or Russian. In either case, the report’s authors think they could be flying wings, such as those developed by the Northrop company. In order to move forward and “since the Air Force is responsible for air traffic control within the framework of United States defense,” the document states that “it is imperative that all other agencies …” S Soviets to send their devices to fly over the United States:

a. To shake the United States' confidence in the atomic bomb as the most advanced and effective weapon of war.

b. To carry out photographic reconnaissance missions, c. To test the United States' air defenses, d. To perform reconnaissance flights over US territory.

These possibilities are then analyzed in detail. Let us cite another excerpt from the conclusion:

It must be acknowledged that flying objects have been observed, although their origin and identification remain problematic. In the interest of national defense, it would be unwise to disregard the possibility that some of these devices could be of foreign origin80.

The existence of such a document can trouble the analyst: here is a top-secret text that seems to confirm what our unfortunate witness expressed right after his observation. Could Arnold therefore have been right, one may ask, Press Coverage of Unidentified Flying Objects, 1947-1966, Ph.D. thesis in journalism, Evanston, 111, Northwestern University, 1970; reissued, New York, Arcturus Book Service, 1982, p. 24.

4. The Associated Press, “Picture of ‘7 Dots’ Proves Latest in Flying Disk Case,” Oregon Journal, Friday, June 27, 1947, p. 8; Tom Caton, “Officials Doubt Story of Phantom Air Fleet,” The Oregonian, Friday, June 27, 1947, p. 1; Bill Bequette, “Experts Reach Deep into Bag to Explain ‘Flying Discs’,” East Oregonian, June 28, 1947, p. 1. For other explanations, see Ted Bloecher, Report on the UFO Wave of 1947, Washington, DC, The Author, 1967, pp. 1-5 and 1-6. The first psychology article published in the academic press appears to be Herbert Hackett’s “The Flying Saucer: a Manufactured Concept,” Sociology and Social Research, vol. 32, 1948, pp. 869-873.

5. The first groups in the United States were the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), founded in January 1952. ad. fr. Chronicles of Extraterrestrial

Appearances, Paris, Denoël, 1972).

11. Linda Degh, “The Belief Legend in Modern Society: Form, Function, and Relationship to Other Genres,” in Wayland D. Hand (ed.), American Folk Legend, a Symposium, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1971, pp. 55-68. Carl Gustav Jung, A Modern Myth. “Signs of the Sky,” Paris, Gallimard, 1961, 316 p.

12. Linda Degh, “UFOs and How Folklorists Should Look at Them,” Fabula, vol. 18, no. 3/4, 1977, pp. 242-248.

13. Thomas E. Bullard, “Folklore Scholarship and UFO Reality,” cited article, p. 9. Bullard himself devoted his dissertation, supervised by Linda Degh, to placing UFOs in perspective with the themes of fantastic folklore. See Thomas E. Bullard, Mysteries in the Eye of the Beholder: UFOs and Their Folkloric Theme Past and Present, Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1982, Ann Arbor, MI, University Microfilms International, xi-594 pp.

14. J.-N. Kapferer, rd, “Humanoids and Anomalous Lights: Taxonomic and Epistemological Problems,” cited article, p. 238.

21. Ibid.; I am the one who underlines.

22. On this question of the possibility of a joint anthropology of ethno-knowledge and knowledge, see Bruno Latour, “How to Redistribute the Great Sharing?” Revue de synthèse, vol. 104, April-June 1983, pp. 203-236, and, by the same author, *Science in Action*, Paris, La Découverte, 1989, especially chapter 5.

23. David J. Hufford, *The Terror that Cornes in the Night: An Experience-Centered Study of Supernatural Assault Traditions*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982; “Traditions of Disbelief,” *New York Folklore* vol. 8, nos. 3-4, 1982, pp. 47-55; “Reason, Rhetoric, and Religion: Academic Versus Scientific Belief,” *New York Folklore* vol. 11, nos. 1-4, 1985, pp. 177-194. See also G. Bennett, *Traditions of Belief*, op. cit.

24. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Frontage and the Worms, the Universe of a 16th-Century Miller*, Paris. », in Roy Wallis (ed.), *On the Margins of Science: the Social Construction of Rejected Knowledge*, Keele, University of Keele (Social Review Monograph, 27), 1979, pp. 237-270 (translation, fr., “In parapsychology, nothing happens that is not scientific…”, in Michel Callon and Bruno Latour (eds.), *Science as It Is Made*, Paris, Pandore, 1982, pp. 249-289); from the same authors one can consult *Frames of Meaning. The Social Construction of Extraordinary Science*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

27. This image is, of course, to be relativized. Many UFO witnesses are also scientists, which once again shows that in fact it is impossible to draw a demarcation line between various categories, for example between “popular” witnesses and “scientific” experts.

28. Kenneth Arnold [Report to Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio], July 1947, 9 p.

29. Kenneth Arnold, *Some Life Data on Kenneth Arnold*, July 1947. Observation of “ghost rockets” over Sweden, the authorities took the matter seriously and actually used their radars in order to track them. Moreover, anticipating Russian action, the Americans dispatched to the site, to advise the Swedish authorities, Lieutenant General James Doolittle, described by reporters as “the most renowned United States expert on long-range bombing” (see “Swedes Use Radar in Fight on Missiles,” The New York Times, August 13 1946, p. 4).

41. Santa Maria Times (UP), July 3 1947. Cited by Loren Gross, Charles Fort, the Fortean Society & Unidentified Flying Objects, Fremont, CA, The Author, 1976, p. 82.

42. Office Memorandum from the SAC of Butte to the FBI director, July 3 1947 (the acronym SAC means special agent in charge). The names in brackets correspond to my reconstructions of the protagonists’ identities. Indeed, when the official documents on 50. Kenneth Arnold and Ray Palmer, *The Coming of the Saucers*: a Documentary Report on Sky Objects that Have Mystified the World, Boise, ID & Amherst, WI, The Authors, 1952, p. 21.

51. Ibid., p. 21-22.

52. On the circumstances of this encounter and the content of Smith’s observation, see ibid., pp. 17-19.

53. Ibid., p. 22.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. See the report of David N. Johnson (addressed to Military Intelligence on July 12) in B. Steiger (ed.), *Project Blue Book*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1976, pp. 37-43, as well as Dave Johnson, “Flying Reporter Finally Sights Black, Darting Disc High Over Boise,” *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, Thursday July 10, 1947, p. 1, 6.

57. K. Arnold and R. Palmer, *The Coming of the Saucers*, op. cit., p. 22.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., p. 23.

60. Ibid.

61. Frank M. Brown, Memorandum for the Officer in Charge (on David N. Johnson), July 16, 1947. Cited in B. Steiger (ed.), *Project Blue Book*, op. cit., p. 36.

62. Ibid. Unidentified Flying Objects, myth or reality?, Paris, Belfond, 1974, p. 15. See also J. Allen Hynek and Jacques Vallée, The Edge of Reality. A Progress Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1975, p. vm-x (French translation, Aux limites de la réalité, Paris, Albin Michel, 1978, p. 10-12).

72. B. Steiger (ed.), Project Blue Book, op. cit., p. 34.

73. Ibid., p. 35-36.

74. “UFO Sighting, Mt Rainier, Washington, 24 June 1947” (unreferenced document located in the archives of the Center for UFO Studies in Chicago, probably, like those cited nos. 28 and 29, from the Blue Book files). This explanation, as well as the aircraft thesis, are both reported by Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence J. Tacker in his work Flying Saucers and the US Air Force, Princeton, N.J., D. Van Nostrand Company, 1960, p. 14-15, 58.

75. Ted Bloecher, Report on the UFO Wave of 1947, op. cit., p. 1-3 a.

76. National Military Establishment Office of Public Legendary among ufologists (as the “first” witness, not as an expert on the subject): Hynek will, himself, become the leading figure of ufology. I don’t know what their discussion yielded, especially whether Hynek changed his views. But when, in December of the same year, Hynek’s second book on the subject appears, the 1948 explanation is still used for the case (New UFO Report, op. cit., pp. 98-99).

80. Here are the references of this highly condensed document: Air Intelligence Division Study No. 203, Directorate of Intelligence and Office of Naval Intelligence, Analysis of Flying Object Incidents in the US, Air Intelligence Report No. 100-203-79, Washington DC, December 10, 1948, pp. 1-16.